

SIUE's Gaehle is March of Dimes Nurse Educator of the Year

by Doug McIlhagga
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EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University School of Nursing's (SIUE SON) Dr. Kay Gaehle was selected Nurse Educator of the Year at the March of Dimes' fifth annual Nurse of the Year Award ceremonies Saturday, Nov. 19, at the Marriott St. Louis Grand Hotel.

The March of Dimes presented 20 awards to nurses who exemplify an extraordinary level of patient care, compassion and customer service in their respective disciplines.

A Highland native, Gaehle is an associate professor with clinical expertise in acute care and medical-surgical nursing. Her scholarship activities include safety related to medication administration, breast cancer detection practices for women 65 years and older, and nursing education. She has been a leader on the Illinois Division Board of the American Cancer Society.

"Dr. Kay Gaehle is the epitome of teaching excellence, so it was not a surprise to us that she was recognized and honored at this prestigious event," said Laura Bernaix, SIUE SON dean. "Everyone in our school can exuberantly attest to her exceptional abilities as a scholarly and dynamic teacher.

"Simply stated, her classroom instruction reflects a reciprocal style of teacher-student interaction, where the student is recognized as a valued contributor to the learning process. Students feel comfortable with her and are eager and motivated to learn. She is a marvelous role model for our students and valuable mentor to our faculty."

Dr. Anne Perry, former SIUE SON interim dean and emeriti faculty member, received the Legend in Nursing award. Perry earned a bachelor's in nursing from the University of Michigan, a master's in nursing from Saint Louis University, and a doctorate in education from SIUE. She is a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing. She joined the SIUE faculty in 2004, while serving in both teaching and administrative roles. Prior to SIUE, Perry held academic appointments at SLU.

"Dr. Anne Perry's contributions to the nursing profession through her clinical practice, teaching, research, leadership and book publications are invaluable," Bernaix said. "She is indeed a 'Legend in Nursing,' and the SIUE School of Nursing is extremely fortunate to have had the honor of her leadership and faculty expertise as part of its history, and are grateful to be able to call her one of our own."

Drs. Jerrica Ampadu and Rachel Beard were finalists in the education category. Ampadu is an assistant professor and director of the Student Nurse Achievement Program (SNAP), with clinical expertise in medical-surgical nursing and trauma nursing. Beard is an assistant professor in primary care and health systems nursing.

Dr. Valerie Griffin and Kevin Stein were finalists in the advanced practice category. Griffin is an assistant clinical professor in family health and community health nursing. Stein is an instructor with clinical expertise in nurse anesthesia.

Dr. Ann Popkess was a finalist in the research category. She is an associate professor and department chair in family health and community health nursing. Her research focuses on the use of role play simulation as a means to enhance learning in students performing suicide assessments and interprofessional medical error disclosures. Additionally, Popkess is a research consultant for the SSM Health DePaul Hospital nursing staff in developing and implementing evidence based projects to improve clinical care and outcomes.

A selection committee of health care professionals reviewed the nominees and narrowed the field to more than 200 finalists among 20 categories. Nurses employed in the state of Missouri and the Illinois counties of Jersey, Madison, St. Clair, Clinton, Monroe and Randolph were eligible.

About the March of Dimes

Whether serving as a health care provider, educator, researcher, volunteer and/or advisor, nurses play a critical role in advancing the mission of the March of Dimes, which is to improve the health of all babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. The Nurse of the Year initiative supports the mission while recognizing exceptional nurses through the region, celebrating the profession and creating awareness of the strides made in this growing field.

The 2016 Nurse of the Year was presented by the Catherine McAuley School of Nursing at Maryville University. Corporate partners included Barnes-Jewish Hospital, St. Louis Children's Hospital, Chamberlain College of Nursing, MU Health Care and Home State Health/Envolve.

About SIUE School of Nursing

The [SIUE School of Nursing's](#) fully accredited programs are committed to creating excellence in nursing leadership through innovative teaching, evidence-based practice, quality research, patient advocacy and community service. Enrolling nearly 1,400 students in its baccalaureate, master's and doctoral programs, the School develops leaders in pursuit of shaping the nursing profession and impacting the health care environment. SIUE's undergraduate nursing programs on the Edwardsville campus and the regional campus in Carbondale help to solve the region's shortage of baccalaureate-

prepared nurses and enhance the quality of nursing practice within all patient service venues. The School's graduate programs prepare nurses for advanced roles in clinical practice, administration and education.